

September 22, 2016
Hieromartyr Phocas
No. 150

To all Rectors, Priests-in-Charge, and Parish Councils of the Diocese of Midwest:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is in our midst!

I write to you to provide an update on the work of the Diocesan Stewardship Working Group (“the DSWG”). As you will recall I wrote to you on October 1, 2015 to announce the formation of the DSWG to work out a new system for obtaining diocesan revenue. It has been recognized for a long time that the current “head tax” assessment method is both antiquated and ineffective. I charged the DSWG to develop a new model would enable the Diocese to continue to execute its canonical responsibilities and programs, and be fair and considerate of each parish’s situation. In addition to the new system being scripturally based, it is to be financially realistic and practical. I am happy to inform you that the DSWG has developed such a system. It will be proposed to the Diocese for approval and implementation at the 2017 Diocesan Assembly.

At the coming Diocesan Assembly in Lansing, Illinois, on October 11, members of the DSWG, the Diocesan Finance Committee will present their proposal, at which time the floor will be open for questions and discussion. This presentation is for information purposes only. As full implementation will take some time, the DSWG will be offering webinars and video-conferences that will be open to the diocese-at-large. Information will also be posted on the Diocesan website after the Assembly. Sometime after the Assembly we anticipate doing a “dry-run” using 2015 fiscal actuals from parishes.

I am grateful to the DSWG for their hard work and their successful results. I believe that both our Diocese and our parishes will be well-served with the adoption of this new system of proportional giving; a system which now has also been adopted for the entire Orthodox Church in America at the 18th All American Council in 2015. At the same time I know that there will be many questions and some confusion. I believe that most questions will be answered at the Assembly, but DSWG members can be contacted later as well via email at midwestdiocesestewardship@gmail.com.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Diocesan Assembly in Lansing, IL, I remain,

With love in Christ, the unworthy

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul
Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest